



Mental Health Film Production Grant



Frequently Asked Questions

What films do you fund?

We fund 5 minute short films that accurately and compassionately tell mental health stories. We do not fund anything that is going to be very triggering for people to watch. Why? Well, we don't want to retraumatize people.

Does that mean I should stay away from difficult topics?

Absolutely not, we do ask that people only explore topics that they have personal experience with or are doing sufficient work to make sure their project is informed by lived-experience of mental health.

How do you make sure a project is informed by lived-experience?

We can see this in the proposal. If you are telling a story about suicide and none of the team have a personal connection to the topic, and there has been no one brought on to inform the team about this lived-experience, we would not consider that film eligible for the grant.

Does my film have to be a heavy mental health film?

No, in fact, we actually prefer to have a big range here. We accept horror, and comedy proposals – amongst all others. This is because mental health involves both dark and light. We love an aching drama exploring pain, but also we love a light documentary exploring joy just as much.

What genres do you accept?

We accept everything, honestly. Dance film? Yep. Horror? Yep. Documentary? Yep. Comedy? Yep. Experimental? Yep. Animation? Yep. We obviously don't accept anything that could be considered hate speech. So don't send us that please.

Does my film have to be 5 minutes?

Yes, our grant is for short films 5 minutes or less, so you have to propose a 5 minute short film if you are hoping to get a grant.

Can I submit more than one idea?

Yep, you can, should you? We have frequently funded people who've submitted two very strong ideas. Have we ever funded anyone that sent us 5 ideas? No. Make sure you're able to send fully rounded out well thought out proposals.

If I'm the producer of one proposal, can I apply as a director on another project?

Yes. See the answer above, we don't mind how many applications you put in, just make sure all you submit is well thought out.

Can I make a 5 minute cut for VWI and an 8 minute cut for myself?

Yes. As long as you put forward a reasonable budget and proposal for a 5 minute VWI version. If you want to make a version, a directors cut, that is 8 minutes or whatever it may be, that is fine. However, do note that we won't fund proposals that are clearly 10 minute films crammed into 5 minutes. If you can say it in 8 minutes, you can say it in 5 minutes. If your film has to be 12 minutes and nothing less, this is probably not the grant for you.

Can I use other sources of funding?

Yes, many applicants fund their film through various sources. What you need to make clear in your proposal is what money you actually already have and what you are applying for. If you are applying for a 5k grant that you'll find out about in December, great, let us know what you'll do with it to improve the film with a total budget of 12.5k. However, make sure you show us what you will do if you do not receive the grant. We need to be able to receive a film if you don't get that other grant your applying for. It is best practise to do a best case scenario budget and a worst case scenario budget if you are applying for additional funds.

If I receive the VWI grant, who owns my film?

You do. You own the Intellectual Property. You will sign an agreement that gives us rights to use the film in our educational programming and Voices With Impact events. If you get that far we can discuss.

Who can submit a proposal?

Anyone, from anywhere in the world. There are too many barriers to making art, so if possible, we remove it. We find our grantees are often people who have made a couple of films with no budget, through school or sheer will. For animators this is a good grant for right after you graduate. We find lots of our filmmakers make films for others but don't get to tell their stories. You can be any age, established or emerging. We just want to help you tell an important story that helps us all connect and discuss mental health.

How long do I have to make the film?

Not long, but you have lots of support. Grants are awarded at the beginning of November and films are delivered in mid April.

How much support do filmmakers get?

You get support regularly from the VWI team through meetings and story consultation. We also connect you with industry mentors. We're serious about mentorship, past mentors have been from Pixar, Disney, Apple TV, HBO, Nickelodeon and National Geographic. They're the real deal.

Is there an embargo period on the film?

Yes, it has to premiere with us in June.

Can I submit the film to festivals?

Yes, and we really want to help you with that. We discuss distribution plans through the project and make sure everyone's needs are met.

Do I get final cut?

You do, the film is yours and you get to choose how you want it to be, artistic freedom is important. Do note, we do work so closely with you that we should be pretty much on the same page after the fine cut, which we do give feedback on. Normally we just say, 'can it be a bit shorter please?' which we know y'all love.